

2026 Men's College World Series

Monday, June 15, 2026

Omaha, Nebraska, USA

Texas Longhorns

Coach Jim Schlossnagle

Adrian Rodriguez

Ethan Mendoza

Ruger Riojas

Postgame Press Conference

Texas - 14, Alabama - 2

THE MODERATOR: We're joined by Texas head coach Jim Schlossnagle and student-athletes Ethan Mendoza, Ruger Riojas and Adrian Rodriguez.

JIM SCHLOSSNAGLE: First of all, congratulations to University of Alabama on an awesome season. Big fan of Coach Vaughn and what he's done with the program and their great year.

Super fired up about our win. Obviously, I thought Ruger did a nice job working around some deep counts and a little bit of traffic. And then obviously the two-out hitting, we got some balls bounced our way in the first innings with those balls down the line. And I think we scored eight outs with two runs, I think, over the course of the game.

And obviously Adrian was awesome. Happy for him considering all the things he's been through this year. Fired up to be able to continue to play.

Q. Adrian, obviously a historic day today. You've been one of the most consistent Longhorn offensive players all postseason. Just talk about your approach today and your whole postseason?

ADRIAN RODRIGUEZ: I've made some swing changes with 2-0 probably when -- the Tennessee series. So it's through the back stretches with, like, dealing with my hand, I've got to get more simple, and just keeping my head in the same position, just not -- being able to see the ball better has been a big factor.



Q. Adrian, when you found out that you had hit the cycle and you're the third player to do that here at the College World Series, what was your reaction to that history? And did you think you tripled there in the second inning?

ADRIAN RODRIGUEZ: No, yeah, Ruger actually came up to me later in the game and told me that they took the error off the board. So it was kind of surreal. Because I remember C-Mo doing it with Tennessee when I was in high school. It's kind of crazy that that's all coming back when we're here. So it's just a crazy moment.

Q. What does today mean to you in the context of last year you missed some time after getting hit by the pitch. This year the surgery. There's been a lot of adversity and then to come through today?

ADRIAN RODRIGUEZ: It's definitely been up and down throughout the season. I really owe it to all the guys that have been having my back throughout the whole year and especially all the coaches that have had my back when I haven't been right mentally. So it's been a grind, but I'm happy that we're doing it right now in the College World Series.

Q. Adrian, that sixth inning AB was a seven-pitch at-bat. And that first pitch on the inside half of the strike zone, you clobbered over the fence. What were you seeing out of Heiberger on that pitch?

ADRIAN RODRIGUEZ: On that pitch, yes, I knew he was a big, heavy fastball guy. So that's what I was just sitting on the hole at-bat. And I got the head out on the ball that was inside. He was kind of working me away the whole at-bat, and I was just fighting off the pitches.

And then that 3-2 pitch, I was just kind of thinking in my head he has to go with the fastball here because that's just what he does. And I just got the -- beat the head to it.

Q. Have you ever hit for the cycle before in your life?

ADRIAN RODRIGUEZ: No, I don't believe so. Maybe when I was in T-ball, when they just let you run around the



bases with no defense, but that's about it.

Q. Did you get home runs that day, too?

ADRIAN RODRIGUEZ: In T-ball, if they count them as home runs, yeah.

Q. What was it like in the dugout, the celebrations? Are guys wanting to borrow your baseball bat to hit and any funny lines in the dugout?

ADRIAN RODRIGUEZ: We usually just do what we do the whole season, just kind of get hyped for the guys around us. It just happened to be me at that moment. So it's just awesome.

Q. Ethan and Ruger, what were the conversations like last night knowing that you guys had to win today or go home?

ETHAN MENDOZA: It's just another ball game. We've got to go out and play our game. Don't need to do anything extra. We know what circumstances we're in right now. But we're just going to go out and do our thing. We don't need to put extra pressure on ourselves. And I feel like we did that today.

RUGER RIOJAS: We understood what was at stake. This could be it. For me, this could be it as a Texas Longhorn. But we play the game how we do. It's a standard, not a scoreboard, and we can't let anything get over our heads such as the result or the outcome of what could be.

And we just I think we were very present today. And Max always has a saying that gratitude lives in the present and the most present team wins. So you just got to live by that.

Q. Ruger, you were pretty confident yesterday saying you were all hard to kill because you had that mentality, and Coach talked about the mental strength. What did it mean to you to go out to that bullpen when you had that lead to turn it over to a guy like Brody Walls and just hype them up and let them know that you're out there supporting them as well?

RUGER RIOJAS: Yeah, I thought it was awesome that Brody was able to go in. Like we could have gone to anybody, but just the trust we had in Brody was -- it didn't surprise me to who we went to next.

Q. Ethan, what does it take for you mentally to play right now with what you're going through, and how does it feel to contribute in the way that you did today, despite obviously some adversity there?

ETHAN MENDOZA: I mean, I'm having a blast. We're winning, playing in the College World Series, doesn't get much better than that. With me, I'm just trying to take care of myself, whatever I need to do. The training staff has helped me, obviously he's helped A-Rod just come back healthier -- Coach Couch, Sammy and all them, Sam included -- they've done a great job with us. And we're very well prepared for what lies ahead.

Q. Coach, seemed like every time Alabama got a little bit of momentum, Ruger was able to shut that down right away. Could you speak a little bit about how it is to have that kind of guy up on the mound for you in this kind of a game?

JIM SCHLOSSNAGLE: We knew we had a chance to have a decent season at the end of the season last year when we were able to get Ruger and Luke and Max Grubbs back. And that was just a huge thing in today's college baseball. You can't coach birthdays. And a lot of the older teams are the ones that seem to be successful.

Ruger has had a great season for us and he was excited to pitch. He created some traffic for himself. They really battled. Lemm had an awesome at-bat at one point in the game. Ruger doesn't really walk a lot of guys. I guess he only walked two. But there are a lot of deep counts.

We made nice plays behind them. I think the double play I think on Brady Neal, the double play was big. And then they were kind of swinging earlier in the count later in his appearance and helped him get through some innings.

Q. Zane had some success against you guys last time. The broadcast today mentioned that he was tipping his pitches. Did you guys see that as well?

JIM SCHLOSSNAGLE: They asked me about that after, but we didn't have anything on him at all -- not that I'd tell you if we did. But no, Zane's a good pitcher. My previous stop we recruited him. He's from Texas. I know he's got family connections to Alabama.

I'm assuming he signs, he's had an awesome career. He was pretty unlucky early. Some of those balls that were hit, they had a third baseman in and we hit one by him. And then A-Rod got one by the first baseman, second and third. So sometimes you'd rather be lucky than good. But today was our day. He's a good pitcher.

Q. When it comes to a scoring decision like that triple/single, is there politicking behind the scenes by your staff to get those changed? And also J just your overall thoughts on Adrian tonight?

JIM SCHLOSSNAGLE: I mean had it not been changed by the end of the game, yeah, I certainly would have said something. I thought that was a clean triple. But I'm glad they made that change during the game.

But no, I don't get in the middle of that unless Josh or somebody, our media relations guy, maybe he did something. But I haven't talked to anybody about that.

Q. Those three guys that were just up, how do they epitomize the spirit of your team with what each of them has gone through in their time here?

JIM SCHLOSSNAGLE: I think the common theme among those three guys is they all wanted to be at Texas. They love being a Texas Longhorn. Mendoza, he wanted to be at Texas after ASU. Ruger, UTSA transfer, loves it, loves the school, loves the program, wanted to come back. And, of course, Adrian, he was committed to us at my previous institution and as soon as we came over, he wanted to be with us. He wanted to be at Texas.

So I think that's the common theme. They're certainly tough kids and competitive and they love being Longhorns.

Q. You obviously have a very fun-loving team and fun-having team. The double celebration is certainly unique and everybody in that dugout is doing it, along with the guy on base paths. Are you just hoping and praying that nobody is throwing their shoulder out of socket here?

JIM SCHLOSSNAGLE: Apparently Mendoza did. I don't get in the middle of that stuff. I just prefer is to play good, clean professional baseball. But part of college baseball is enthusiasm. As long as it's not directed at the other team, that's cool.

But yeah, we want these guys to have fun. A confident player that's playing with freedom and joy is a scary player, and that's the best version we can have right now.

Q. I couldn't help but notice all the three guys you brought have kind of -- they've been hurt at some point. You've kind of hinted at some other stuff. What element has toughness played in getting your team to where it is right now?

JIM SCHLOSSNAGLE: Gotta give our training staff credit, for sure, and the strength and conditioning, and the kids themselves.

But I think anybody that plays this deep into a season -- I don't know, maybe Georgia's perfectly healthy, I don't know. But most teams by now, you're pretty banged up,

and everybody's dealing with something. The best you're ever going to feel is the best game of the season pretty much. And from that point forward, most of the time it's downhill.

But one saying we have in our program is, if you have to feel good to play well, then don't even play, because that's rarely going to happen. And so I'm really proud of our team for showing that grit.

Q. Was this exactly the kind of game you would have drawn up to help you all get past Georgia and get your confidence going? And second, what the heck are you feeding A-Rod?

JIM SCHLOSSNAGLE: Yeah, he just had the same breakfast I had this morning. But A-Rod's a good player. A-Rod would be a mid .300s, a high .300s, double-digit homer, 15-homer player. He's a potential first-rounder. Hopefully this summer we can get him fully healthy. But he's a great player.

And in terms of the type of game, just a win. I would have liked for Ruger to be a little more efficient, but you have to respect Alabama, too.

And so yeah, we'll take it. He's certainly not having to use Luke or a Sam or Burns or Crossland. Really excited about Brody Walls, though. Brody Walls is in a good place right now.

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